CD/PV.644
25 February 1993

ENGLISH

# FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 25 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Radoslav Deyanov (Bulgaria)

GE.93-60340 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 644th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the beginning, I wish to warmly welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Wolfgang Schallenberg, who is inscribed as first speaker at this plenary meeting. Ambassador Schallenberg is a distinguished career diplomat who has already occupied other positions of responsibility and was involved at a certain stage in our efforts to ban chemical weapons. I wish to note the important contributions made by Austria, a non-member State, to the work of the Conference on a number of substantive issues. Its delegation to the Conference has been very active and has provided a valuable contribution to the forum in this Conference and other participants in the work of this body.

I have on my list of speakers today the representatives of Austria, the Netherlands and Spain. I now give the floor to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Wolfgang Schallenberg.

Mr. SCHALLENBERG (Austria)(translated from French): Mr. President, thank you for your kind words. Allow me first of all to tell you how happy we are to see you in the Chair. At the same time I should like to congratulate Ambassador Amorim, whose close links with Vienna we are well aware of, on ensuring a good start to the work of the Conference in such an outstanding manner. Similarly, I should like to pay tribute to the excellent work done by the secretariat of the Conference, and notably by Ambassador Berasategui. Lastly, I would not wish to fail to mention that Mr. Bensmail's efforts are well known and appreciated in the Austrian capital.

The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" is a timely document which reflects very appropriately the new facts and issues in this field at this time. A more detailed commentary on the report in its entirety has been submitted to the United Nations Secretariat, and we plan to outline its main thrust during the session of the First Committee which is to be held in just two weeks' time in New York. My statement today will be devoted to three of the subjects that are mentioned therein: the relationship between regional and global disarmament; the nuclear threat; and the new disarmament machinery.

With respect to the relationship between the regional and global approach in disarmament, we fully endorse the view of the Secretary-General that "regional and subregional organizations can further the globalization of disarmament, both in cooperation with each other and with the United Nations". In keeping with General Assembly resolution 47/52 J of 9 December 1992, we also consider that a close link between regional disarmament and the Conference on Disarmament would be beneficial for the solution of the entire range of disarmament issues. The Conference could provide specific knowledge to States participating in regional disarmament efforts and it could also benefit in return from the experience thus

(Mr. Schallenberg, Austria)

acquired. Thus, the disarmament order enshrined by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Helsinki agreements of 10 July 1992 providing for a great variety of monitoring machinery can certainly be considered as a source of inspiration, if not a model, for many other regions of the world.

To introduce the second subject of my statement, that is to say the nuclear threat, I should like first and foremost to announce that Austria welcomes the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban. Indeed, we greatly hope that this committee will successfully conclude the substantive work which it has begun in accordance with its mandate. We would welcome the conclusion of this work as soon as possible. Negotiations on a treaty for a comprehensive nuclear test ban could thus begin without delay. At this stage I should like to recall that on 5 June last, the Chamber of Deputies of the Austrian parliament, the Nationalrat, the National Council, called for an immediate halt to all nuclear tests even before an international obligation is established to this end. The Deputies also requested the Austrian Government to continue its policy of rejecting all nuclear tests, given that the latter constitute an enormous danger for the environmental health and balance of the world as a whole. They also encouraged our Government to support relevant proposals to reduce nuclear arsenals and promote the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We therefore took note with satisfaction of the START II agreement signed on 3 January last between the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation, which provides for a substantial reduction of the nuclear arsenals of these two countries. However, we must also express our profound concern that the conditions for the entry into force of the two START treaties have not yet been met. In this context, Austria urges the States which, like Ukraine, belonged to the former Soviet Union and possess nuclear weapons on their territory, to take the necessary measures to ratify the NPT as soon as possible, in accordance with the commitments made in Lisbon on 23 May 1992 by Byelorussia, the United States of America, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine.

The Chamber of Deputies of our parliament also requested the Austrian Government to examine the international proposals designed to reduce nuclear arsenals, and to support them whenever they are consistent with Austrian interests. It is therefore our intention to review closely matters related, inter alia, to the relationship between nuclear deterrence and disarmament, on the one hand, and between nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons on the other. Of course, during this review we will take account of political realities as well as the genuine degree of adherence to the NPT, both from the quantitative and from the qualitative standpoints. Thus we will note that the pax atomica which prevailed during the cold war by dint of the maintenance of the nuclear balance between the two super-Powers has now been called into question. This is so in particular as, since the disappearance of the Soviet nuclear pillar, the nuclear arsenal has become a bargaining chip between some of the former Soviet republics. The pax atomica has also been

(Mr. Schallenberg, Austria)

called into question because some States still do not wish to subscribe to the NPT. Moreover, in the wake of the Gulf war, on-site inspections conducted in Iraq, which has signed the NPT, have revealed the shortcomings of this treaty, shortcomings which must be remedied.

Thus it is no doubt the fear of extensive and rapid nuclear proliferation which has recently underscored the discriminatory nature of the NPT. It is because of concern over horizontal and global nuclear proliferation that Austria will fully support the efforts made within the International Atomic Energy Agency to strengthen its system of safeguards. We view such a strengthening as essential if we are to restore confidence in the proper functioning of this system. Moreover, we consider that these efforts will enable IAEA in the future not only to fully discharge its duty to implement the safeguards throughout the world, but also to enhance its ability to play a still more important role in this field.

In the run-up to the NPT review and extension conference in 1995, the moratoriums on nuclear tests augur well. I should like to recall in this context that since acceding to the NPT in 1969, Austria has always firmly supported it in all its aspects. It has actively participated in the periodic review conferences. Between now and the 1995 review and extension conference, Austria will continue to work for the indefinite extension of the NPT and will endeavour to promote the universal nature of this instrument, whose importance is paramount for international security. We are also encouraged to note that the NPT has 16 additional parties since the fourth review conference in 1990, and that all the nuclear-weapon States are now party to it, at least as defined by the treaty itself. We think this is all the more important as the management of nuclear power, together with management of the environment, represents the major challenge for the survival of mankind.

The third and last subject of my statement will be devoted to the new disarmament machinery which has already been the subject of the great majority of statements delivered before this Conference since the beginning of this year. What is more, we think that the designation of Ambassadors Marín Bosch of Mexico and O'Sullivan of Australia as coordinators for the questions of the agenda and the expansion of the CD has clearly demonstrated the importance which the Conference on Disarmament attaches to these subjects.

In view of the fact that the danger of a proliferation of regional conflicts triggered by a variety of political, economic and cultural factors has now become more threatening than in the past, we consider that expansion of the CD is inevitable. Without it, the CD would not be able to reflect the fact that the world has radically changed and that it has become a multi-polar world. And if the CD no longer reflected the state of the world, there would be a risk that its decisions would no longer bind those whose interests were not taken into account. As you know, the arguments in favour of a substantial expansion of the Conference are not advanced only by observer countries, but increasingly by the members of the Conference themselves. This trend shows clearly that the danger that the

(Mr. Schallenberg, Austria)

Conference will become weakened as a result of an increase in the number of its members is less and less substantial. And yet the success of the negotiations on chemical weapons could have constituted a pretext for a more restrictive approach. But that was not the case.

Since 1979, when the non-member countries of the CD had an opportunity to participate in the work of the Conference for the first time, Austria has been granted observer status from year to year, and this began at a time when the number of States represented among the observers was very small. Since it is firmly resolved to contribute more actively to multilateral disarmament efforts, Austria made a formal application for admission back in 1982. Nevertheless, the application has not yet been taken up, even though the CD has regularly acknowledged that the issue of the expansion of the Conference called for an urgent decision. Austria sincerely hopes that the new phase of work on which the Conference is now embarking will also prove an appropriate time to act at last on our application for membership.

The active role played by Austria within the Conference on Disarmament is well known, both among the members and among the observers. We have pursued it in the shape of numerous statements, working papers and, in particular, the offer made at the time to host the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Vienna. There is also an additional reason for Austria to join the CD as a member: following the disappearance of the confrontation between the two military blocs in Europe, Austria has an increased need to maintain its security through active participation in the development of international treaties, notably in the disarmament field. This perception is borne out by the cruel war which is now being waged in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Austrian Government is of the view that countries which are ready and able to contribute significantly to multilateral disarmament measures should be accepted as equals by the members of the CD. We think that this would strengthen the potential of the Conference and, especially in the long term, would constitute an important factor to ensure the universal scope of the Conference's decisions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor to address the item of Transparency in armaments, and more specifically the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Before doing so, I should like to wish you every success in presiding over the Conference. You can be assured of my delegation's full support in carrying out your responsibilities in this regard. Allow me also to express gratitude to our previous President, Ambassador Amorim of Brazil, who greatly facilitated an expeditious start of the Conference in 1993. I would also like to cordially welcome our distinguished guest of today, the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Wolfgang Schallenberg.

(Mr. Schallenberg, Austria)

In 1991, the United Nations General Assembly decided with an overwhelming majority of votes to establish the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. By doing so, the United Nations took an important step forward in promoting greater openness and transparency in military matters. As a confidence-building measure, the value of the Register rests in its potential to foster a climate of mutual trust and restraint, leading to greater regional and international peace and security.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was established on 1 January 1992. In order to ensure the effective operation of the Register, the Secretary-General of the United Nations brought together in 1992 a panel of governmental technical experts, on the basis of equitable geographical representation. The panel, which I had the honour to chair, elaborated the technical procedures for the Register. For instance, it developed a practical one-page standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional weapons. In addition to the technical aspects, the panel looked into the modalities for early expansion of the Register and addressed the resource implications for the maintenance of the Register by the United Nations Secretary-General. The panel produced a consensus report (A/47/342), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, also by consensus.

With the Register having been established and the technical procedures in place, everything is set for the next crucial phase, that is inputs of data and information by United Nations Member States. In anticipation of and preparation for these national inputs, quite a bit of supportive activity is going on. I refer to regional workshops and symposiums undertaken or being undertaken in all five continents of our globe. As for Europe, the CSCE Forum for Security Cooperation is close to agreeing to exchange copies of national submissions to the United Nations Register among themselves. The target date for those submissions is quickly approaching. The first registration is to take place by 30 April 1993 in respect of the calendar year 1992. To be reported to the United Nations Secretary-General are data on imports and exports of seven categories of major equipment. For this purpose, Member States are to complete the standardized reporting form. If no imports or exports of any of the seven categories occurred in 1992, a so-called nil return will suffice. In addition to data on imports and exports of arms, Member States are invited to provide the Secretary-General with available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies. The term "available" indicates that no special reports need to be prepared for submission to the Register. The background information referred to contains Government white papers, policy statements and the like. In fact, quite a few United Nations Member States, among them the Netherlands, have already submitted such information to the Secretary-General (A/47/370 and addenda).

The importance of participation in the Register by as many States as possible cannot be overstated. The Register can only be effective as a confidence-building measure if States are prepared to use it. The Netherlands Government strongly supports the United Nations Register and its objectives, and

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

will submit its return by the required date of 30 April. It is the fervent hope of my Government that all those present here today, both members of the Conference and non-members participating in the work of the Conference, will do the same. I dare say that the Conference on Disarmament has a special responsibility in keeping up the momentum that has led to the establishment of the Register. We, the CD community, member States and Observer States, should give a positive example to the international community by participating in the Register ourselves and encouraging others to do likewise.

It goes without saying that my delegation welcomes the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments. It is a timely recognition of the relevance of this subject in the post-cold-war era. Furthermore, by establishing the Ad Hoc Committee, the Conference on Disarmament has given proof that it is capable of keeping in step with a changing international environment.

The Conference on Disarmament has been requested by the General Assembly to address a number of aspects of openness and transparency in armaments. One such request pertains to elaborating practical means to increase openness and transparency in areas such as military holdings and procurement of arms through national production. Another request has to do with increasing openness and transparency related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with existing legal instruments. The work of the Conference on Disarmament on these issues will be taken into account by the group of governmental experts to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in 1994 to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. While it is the prerogative of the 1994 group of governmental experts to draw up specific conclusions and recommendations for the continuing operation and possible expansion of the Register, the Conference on Disarmament can usefully prepare the groundwork by providing the Group with substantive ideas. This requires, however, that the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments focus in 1993 on those areas where progress is possible.

In the view of my delegation, tangible progress can be made in 1993 with regard to the so-called interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production. The General Assembly has requested the Conference to address this question as soon as possible and elaborate practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field. The Ad Hoc Committee should heed this request by giving priority attention to the discussion of this question. The urgency of the CD handling this matter, in an adequate and timely manner, stems from the fact that the United Nations Secretary-General will in all likelihood establish the 1994 group of governmental experts as early as January next, after which the Group is expected to begin its deliberations expeditiously. The expert group will have at its disposal inter alia the United Nations Secretary-General's consolidated report of national submissions on the calendar year 1992. Later on, in the course of 1994, the United Nations Secretary-General's consolidated report on the calendar year 1993 will also

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

become available. Further guidance for the 1994 governmental expert group consists of views submitted by Member States on the operation of the Register and its further development.

The 1994 Group will review the Register, and its function in the transparency process, in both practical and conceptual terms. It is a fair guess that the Group will look into such matters as the level of participation in the Register; possible improvements to the standardized reporting form; definitional problems; possible modifications of the existing parameters of the seven categories of equipment; possible inclusion of new categories of equipment; and possible inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production. It is evident that the 1994 governmental expert group could use a push from the CD in Geneva.

Things are moving, and they are moving fast. I wish strongly to underline the importance of the CD providing its contributions, adequately and on time. That means we should start our work in the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments without further delay.

As for weapons of mass destruction and transfers of high technology with military applications, previous discussions within the CD have indicated a considerable divergence of views as to how these issues relate to increased openness and transparency. On weapons of mass destruction, my Government holds the view that the existing legal instruments dealing with these types of weapons constitute, between them, a coherent interlocking network of provisions which are directly relevant to the question at hand. Taking these legal instruments as the basis, the Netherlands is of course willing to discuss practical means of increasing openness and transparency that would help to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, as well as their delivery systems. As to developing practical measures related to transfers of high technology with military applications, my delegation looks forward to continuing the exchange of views on these issues both in the CD Ad Hoc Committee and in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Very interesting proposals have been put on the table.

Mr. President, in conclusion, allow me to address the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms one more time. As I stated earlier, the Register is about to enter its next crucial phase - inputs of data and information by Governments. It is of the utmost importance that States participate in the Register, right from the start. For only then can the Register develop into an essential building block in a family of efforts that will help to bring about a new political and security relationship between States, a relationship characterized by transparency, trust and partnership.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain, Ambassador Pérez-Villanueva.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Mr. PEREZ-VILLANUEVA (Spain)(translated from Spanish): Mr. President, at the beginning of my statement today I would like to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the confidence I myself and my delegation have that, firstly, you will be fully aware of the important moment in which the Conference finds itself as regards a number of vital aspects for its future and, on the other hand, my delegation's absolute conviction that you will discharge your functions in an outstanding manner. I would also like to express appreciation for the efforts and professional skills of your predecessor, the Ambassador of Brazil, and of course, since we know him well, to pay tribute to the same professional skills in your successor, the Ambassador of Canada. All of them efficiently advised and assisted by Ambassador Berasategui, our Secretary-General. I would also like to welcome amongst us Ambassador Wolfgang Schallenberg, the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose statement we followed very carefully this morning and we will study it in detail and analyse it.

On various occasions in public and in private I have had the opportunity of setting out in detail Spain's opinion about the situation facing the Conference on Disarmament at this time. I have also had an opportunity to reveal Spain's analysis of the role of this Conference in its present environment in the context of the United Nations, and its foreseeable and desirable task in the future. Allow me today, Sir, to restate our ideas formally in this plenary. The future of the Conference is not guaranteed. It should not be taken for granted that in the present political context everyone agrees on a sure and well-defined future for the Conference. This, and only this, is in our view the ineluctable starting-point for any analysis of its most obvious problems, such as its agenda and the number of members.

The Conference on Disarmament is at this present point in time suffering from an identity crisis whose manifestations and symptoms should not be confused with its deep-rooted and genuine causes. In other words, the Conference has a problem of expansion outstanding and also an agenda problem because its role is not clear in the international community, nor even in the context of the United Nations bodies devoted to disarmament and arms control. Therefore I think it should be said that if the deep-rooted causes were resolved, the complications arising from them could also be resolved easily.

Regarding the possible role of the Conference today and in the future, there are various queries pending. Is it useful to preserve a body specifically devoted to disarmament negotiation? Is it not better and more appropriate at this point in time to integrate disarmament and its specialized bodies into a broader context of security? Has the age of major agreements on disarmament not already passed? Is there really a specific domain for multilateral disarmament negotiations or is there only room for bilateral negotiations? On these and many

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

other questions which remain unanswered we base our conviction that the first phase of the problem consists, as I said, in giving a diagnosis and resolving the doubts that hover over the future of the Conference and even its utility.

In our view, part of the doubts about the future of the Conference are the direct consequence of former times, and specifically of patterns generated by the cold war. Disarmament conceived as an exclusively bilateral negotiation, and therefore depending solely on the initiative of the countries involved in it, the restriction of agreements on disarmament to just one of its aspects, that of mutually assured destruction, and even the elimination of major categories of weapons - all this, as I say, is in our view a legacy from the past which no one is interested in perpetuating. Disarmament and arms control affect first and foremost and in an all-embracing way the very immediate security interests of all States. And this is not just because there are weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems for them, which enables us to think that no one is free of the threat. Conventional weapons too are a major concern, and I would say conventional weapons above all, in so far as unfortunately we seem to have entered a phase of violent regional conflicts involving the large-scale use of conventional weapons, which are therefore directly to blame for all the victims that we see today in the world as a consequence of hostile clashes. If disarmament efforts are undertaken, they must be comprehensive and open to all States, not only as a right, but I would say also as an obligation.

As to disarmament limited to the reduction or elimination of specific categories of weapons, I must say that in our view this is not the only sphere of activity in which an organ such as this Conference can and should carry out its operations. Disarmament also means helping to change attitudes. It is not enough to snatch the weapon from the hands of the potential aggressor. If belligerence persists, the weapon will sooner or later find its way back into the hands of the party that thinks it has reasons to wield it. In other words, it is not enough to destroy and prohibit chemical weapons, and it is not enough to prohibit and eliminate bacteriological weapons. And obviously without a deep-seated change in the expectations of the nuclear-weapon countries and their analyses of the future, with regard to their own security, it is in our view deceptive to think that these weapons can be removed from the face of the Earth in the near future. Consequently, this Conference must and can contribute to changing attitudes, and that is what we understand to be the purpose of some non-proliferation measures, for example, and the institution of confidence-building measures, which we think represent, inter alia, the major path that is now opening up before the Conference on Disarmament.

In Spain's view there is consequently an important function to be discharged by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, retaining from its present structure the following characteristics: its character as a negotiating and not simply deliberative body, and the rule of consensus. The international community in general, and the United Nations specifically, have two main types of multilateral

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

body devoted to the major problems relating to disarmament and arms control: deliberative bodies on the one hand, and another which is and should remain a negotiating body. The First Committee of the General Assembly should and in fact does make it possible for all member countries to express misgivings and points of view on the subject before us; differences between them do not constitute an obstacle but on the contrary a means of enriching the knowledge each of us has of the concerns and priorities of the others. Meanwhile, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, whose task and purpose are more contentious, has an aim that in our view is less all-embracing than the First Committee to which it reports. Within an agenda that is very short for the sake of efficiency, the Commission should limit itself to providing guidelines, instructions and basically rules of conduct that are applicable to disarmament processes - always following the rule of consensus - from which the Conference, the negotiating body, can and should draw inspiration for its work, although not in an exclusive manner.

Two deliberative bodies, then, and one negotiating one. My Government thinks that this is a satisfactory structure to harness the efforts of States on a or o subject that, at the end of the twentieth century, must become an absolute priority for all the peoples of the globe. In his report of 23 October last year entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era", the United Nations Secretary-General takes up this specific characteristic of the Conference, although of course, other observations by the Secretary-General in the same document nevertheless tend to assign it extra functions in addition to the specifically negotiating function. In our view, the present structure of the international community, as I was saying, is conducive to the globalization of disarmament negotiations and enhances the capacities of a body such as this, with the necessary readjustments in the agenda and membership.

Consensus: it is not easy to imagine negotiations on such a sensitive subject for the security of States without resorting to the only way in which the government of a nation expresses its agreement with an international legal rule and therefore manifests its resolve and its legal and political commitment to respect it. As the international community becomes involved in supranational forms of governance, if that is what the future holds, thought might be given to systems other than that of consensus to give shape to the results of negotiations. It is too soon for that now. We cannot see, therefore, how to replace consensus as the culmination of negotiations in this Conference with another type of formula that would oblige States to apply and respect what has been agreed, and I deliberately speak of consensus as a final phase and not consensus as a means of modifying the pace of the negotiations improperly and hampering the reaching of agreement through various kinds of capricious or uncooperative action.

I would venture to point out that now I have not so far mentioned either the problem of the agenda of the Conference or the problem of its membership, for the coming years. In this way I wish to indicate that what we view as the essential

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

role of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating body does not depend on our all finding, with greater or lesser difficulty, possible subjects for negotiation in this sphere, or managing to come to an agreement on the number and status of countries that are to participate in it. The clear concept of the role of the Conference in the future is, as I said before, a prior and fundamental issue. The Conference has a function to carry out: therefore let us use it to reach agreement on outstanding and urgent issues in the field of disarmament.

Having set forth the reasons why Spain considers that there is a place in the sun for the Conference on Disarmament, a specific usefulness and in short a necessary purpose, I would now like to devote a few moments to the problem of expansion. We fully agree with the Secretary-General of the United Nations when he says in the report that we mentioned earlier that "the goal is to extend disarmament efforts to include not only bilateral agreements but also multilateral arrangements in a world-wide process involving all States". The reasons that underlie this statement by the Secretary-General are the same as those that lead us to believe that the process of disarmament in the future must be multilateral and based on consensus. A treaty prohibiting chemical weapons between the two main possessors of this type of weapon would never have offered the same degree of security to the international community, or even the signatories of such a bilateral agreement themselves, as that achieved with the entry into force of the chemical weapons treaty. Disarmament agreements negotiated among sovereign States, which are intended to be universally applicable, must also be negotiated in the same way.

The Conference, as Spain understands it, has a meaning in so far as its function is discharged in a multilateral environment. And practically all the delegations present here acknowledge that today the Conference as a multilateral organ is not representative of the world that surrounds it. And therefore it is not truly multilateral. In order to become so it must also increase the number of its members. Since 1984 this has not been possible. But nobody seems to contest the need to expand it periodically. This leads us to deduce that the Conference itself accepts the idea that its multilateral character obliges it to orient itself towards universality, that is to say, to cease to be a body with limited participation. Besides noting this, which has been an obvious trend over recent years, it is also intellectually and politically practically impossible in Spain's view to substantiate the imperative need for the Conference on Disarmament to maintain its characteristic limited profile even now. The only reason put forward to support this is efficiency in negotiations, but in our view this argument does not stand up to a historical analysis of the achievements of the Conference, nor does it explain why the Disarmament Commission in New York, for example, also operates by consensus, is open to all and achieves consensus in a nimble and very reasonable way.

I am also pleased to note that such valuable opinions as those expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom in a recent statement to this plenary tally with the idea that I have just put forward: big is not always more beautiful, and small is not always a guarantee of efficiency. We are convinced

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

that given the spirit that prevailed in the Committee on Chemical Weapons in Geneva in the last months of the negotiations, there would have been no difference in completing the final text of the treaty among 40 members of the Conference on Disarmament and 20 observers, which is what happened, and doing so among 60 full members, which is what should have happened. Moreover, reiterating an argument that has already been put forward by my delegation on several occasions before this plenary, there is a direct relationship between desirable universality in acceding to and applying the instruments negotiated in this body and the possibilities of access to it. It is contradictory to require a State that has no right to negotiate it to recognize as desirable for its security the clauses of a treaty of whose scope it has no knowledge. And there is no purpose in saying that certain sovereign countries should confine themselves to making the best possible use of the only status that they are allowed, that of observer in a body that does not accept them as full members, while assuring them that the difference between members and non-members is unimportant. We do not see things in that way.

Another argument, finally, in favour of unlimited membership of the Conference is the fact that it is supported by the budgets of the United Nations, which receive contributions from many countries that have so far not been admitted to the Conference. They include my country, and in no small measure. In the view of Spain there is no valid reason whatsoever to think that the Conference on Disarmament should have limited membership. If it is to be truly multilateral, it must be universal. Having said all this, my country does not consider - I repeat, does not consider - that the doors of the Conference must be permanently open. We think that the open character that we feel this Conference should have should take the form of a commitment to review its composition, and consequently the number of its members, periodically. Otherwise upholding the open nature of the Conference at all costs would lead us into a situation of unviable instability in which the number of participants would frequently vary and would undoubtedly be a disruptive element.

Analysis and periodic review, then, of the membership of the Conference. Here and now we are aware of the need to reach a practical and therefore viable solution of the problem of expansion. In the view of my delegation, first of all, those States that have expressed their intention to join the Conference and have formally requested to do so should become members as soon as possible. Spain has been a member of this group since 24 June 1982. Secondly, this means that account would be taken of the wishes of those countries which have expressed an interest in the Conference and therefore consider themselves in a position to make contributions to it. Nobody should decide for them whether or not they are capable of making a useful contribution. Thirdly, in expanding the Conference the classic elements of balance adopted to date in United Nations circles should not be used as criteria. These criteria have been the direct cause of the inability of the Conference to face up to a very limited increase in the number of its members over the past eight years. Equally impractical as a solution for expediting the expansion of the Conference, in our view, is the idea of linking the status of some of its present components to the admission of new members.

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

Those of us who are not yet members cannot depend on this. Fourthly, the expansion of the Conference on this occasion should be substantial and probably around 20 new States.

We are aware of the efforts and professional skill of the special coordinator for issues relating to the expansion of the Conference, Ambassador O'Sullivan, with whom we will cooperate closely and whom we wish success, not only out of self-interest but also because of friendship. Both Ambassador O'Sullivan and Ambassador Servais of Belgium, whom we would also like to thank for his efforts in this field, have had the opportunity of observing a phenomenon that was highlighted by Mr. Douglas Graham, the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs of New Zealand, before this plenary recently. I refer to the stark contrast in views between members and non-members of the Conference concerning the open-ended nature of participation in this body. Members prefer a closed Conference, non-members an open one. This contrast prompts discouraging and pessimistic thinking on the future of the institution itself if the path that is actually going to be followed is that of a limited, selective, sporadic and in the final analysis artificial expansion of this Conference.

The agenda of the Conference in our view is an important problem to which, in order to tackle the problems of our Conference, a satisfactory solution must be found, with the efficient assistance of Ambassador Marín Bosch. If we have a Conference whose destiny and usefulness are clear for all; if in addition the number of its members has been substantially increased, we have not the slightest doubt that it will be possible to prepare an appropriate agenda that will enable us to make use of the resources that have been invested in the Conference, and which ultimately constitutes a viable instrument for the correct development of the intrinsic activities of a negotiating body operating in a multilateral context and by consensus. In any case, and as a foretaste of what in my delegation's view would be the agenda of our future Conference on Disarmament, we should highlight such chapters as regional measures, confidence-building measures, a big chapter which could cover nuclear aspects, and finally subjects concerning conventional weapons, with a view to transparency in transfers, a subject referred to recently by Ambassador Schallenberg and Ambassador Wagenmakers. All these major chapters have specific aspects on which, in our view, it would be possible to start the work of an Ad Hoc Committee.

With regard to regional measures, it is perfectly appropriate to think about drawing up a long list of measures that could defuse conflicts of this nature whose impulses "become a threat to international peace and global security", to quote the words of Ambassador Wagenmakers before this plenary a few days ago. Confidence-building measures are in our opinion an important prerequisite for any disarmament and arms control agreement: they help to eliminate unknown quantities, dispel misgivings and finally better quantify genuine security and defence needs. In nuclear matters, Spain considers that the time is right to consider the desirability of starting negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a treaty to institute the cessation of nuclear tests. This step alone would

(Mr. Pérez-Villanueva, Spain)

not suffice to reduce and eliminate atomic weapons. But it is a necessary step, and in our view there is a growing state of mind, reflected, moreover, in unilateral decisions taken by the nuclear-weapon States, favourable to a decision of this type. The Conference on Disarmament could also be the appropriate place for the international community to become fully aware of the progress made in nuclear disarmament by unilateral or bilateral decisions, and the moderation and self-restraint with which some of the nuclear-weapon States have been planning and conducting tests in recent years. We truly think that this new situation constitutes a favourable environment for the initiation of negotiations on the cessation of nuclear tests at the appropriate time.

Security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States are also matters of special importance. The transfer of conventional weapons must also have a place in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament as one of the aspects that call for strict and effective international control. The excessive accumulation of weapons - excessive because it is unjustified and unrelated to real defence requirements - gives rise to situations of tension and instability which lead to the consequences that we can all remember, for example, in the recent Gulf war.

To conclude, I would say that many of the elements that I have referred to in my statement today before this plenary, many of my propositions coincide with those made by representatives of other member and non-member States before this plenary. This convergence of opinions in this case as in others is an encouraging sign that the solution is within reach. Perhaps the only important message that I would like to leave in this room is that of our renewed hope. It is the renewed hope of a country like Spain which is today a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Hope that the whirlwind of events that have shaken the until recently immutable international status quo have at least had the virtue of producing a salutary process of reflection and apparently one of change in institutions that were perhaps somewhat petrified and rooted in obsolete patterns, but are essential and full of promise in this Conference.

In concluding, Sir, allow me to apologize to you and your colleagues in this room for the length of this statement. My only excuse is that we do not take the floor very often, and perhaps this has made my statement today more bearable.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other representative wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

The secretariat has distributed today the weekly timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies next week. Provision is made for an informal open-ended consultation on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, to be chaired by Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan, and to be held

on Thursday 4 March, immediately after the plenary meeting. In accordance with our practice, the timetable is indicative and can be changed if the need arises. If there is no objection, we shall proceed to adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I now turn to another subject? The two reports to be transmitted to the Chairman of the First Committee are being processed now by the secretariat in all languages, under the symbols CD/1183 and CD/1184. No comments have been received in connection with the translations circulated by the secretariat last Monday morning, and we expect the texts in all languages to be available in the delegations' pigeon-holes tomorrow, Friday 26 February, at noon. The secretariat is also taking measures to transmit the two reports, together with the letter of transmittal signed by me, to the technical services at Headquarters for the processing of the relevant documents of the First Committee.

I wish to inform you that I shall be absent from Geneva on official duties during part of next week and therefore, in accordance with rule 10 of the rules of procedure, the next plenary meeting will be chaired by my deputy, Mr. Halatchev.

I have no other business for today, and I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday 4 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.